APPLICATION COVER SHEET SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

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harl	Date: June 23, 2010			
The State, through its authorized representative, agi	rees to comply with all requirements applicable to the assurances contained herein and the conditions that apply			

California's Plan for Implementing School Improvement Grants 2009

The California State Board of Education (SBE) is recognized as the official State Education Agency (SEA) as identified in federal statute and regulation. Any reference to the California Department of Education (CDE) throughout this application indicates the CDE under the policy direction of the SBE.

The state of California intends to substantially improve the academic achievement of the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools by aligning the resources of Race to the Top (RTTT), State Fiscal Stabilization Funding (SFSF), and the School Improvement Grant (SIG) to support specific and substantial school improvement activities as directed by federal guidance. SIG funding will be provided to local educational agencies (LEAs) with schools that meet eligibility requirements (Tier I, II, and III schools) as defined by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) according to prescribed priorities and evidence of greatest need and demonstration of greatest commitment.

California's SIG will direct funds toward key infrastructure supports such as redefining the working relationship between the state and its LEAs, improving teacher and leader effectiveness, strengthening the use of data at the state and local level, as well as turning around the lowest-achieving schools. The state will redefine its working relationship with LEAs by focusing on local flexibility, sharing of expertise, and strengthening the statewide system of regional support. The SIG calls for increasing teacher and leader effectiveness through the use of performance data, supporting school turnaround leaders, and providing staff with high-quality professional development. Strengthening the use of data will be two-fold by strengthening the state's data system as well as a focus on strengthening the use of data at the local level for improving instruction. Like RTTT, the SIG directs state applicants to identify its persistently lowest-achieving schools in the state and provide intensive improvement activities by implementing one of the four intervention models.

To support school improvement efforts, the state will strengthen our statewide system of support through clear agreements and accountability measures with its regional consortia that will provide support to LEAs as they implement effective intervention strategies, offer services to support their efforts, and help develop and monitor clear performance measures. The technical assistance to be provided by the regional consortia will be guided by the requirements of the SIG application and LEA Request for Applications (RFA) that follow. The state will also work to ensure schools have success upon implementing an intervention model by promoting district partnerships to share expertise and lessons learned in ways that can build upon and sustain success.

The state will collect, in partnership with its LEA SIG sub-grantees, school-level data on all ED designated metrics, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) reporting requirements under Section 1512(c), grantee quarterly expenditure reports, and the results of on-site visits by state staff or the regional consortia. The state will conduct a program evaluation that addresses annual accountability data, any specific data

requests from ED, and the provision of the nine leading indicators identified by ED in its December 18, 2009, SIG Guidance.

The specific elements to which ED has required the SEA to respond are provided below.

Part I: SEA Requirements

A. Eligible Schools

California's RTTT application used the following methodology for identifying California's persistently lowest-achieving schools:

The state first identified Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring (n=2,708) and secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds (n=968). To ensure equitable representation of California's schools, these two main groups were further divided into subgroups of elementary, middle, and high schools. To identify the lowest five percent of each subgroup, the state then calculated the average three-year proficiency rate for English-language arts and mathematics using the three previous school years (2006–07, 2007–08, and 2008–09). In accordance with ED guidance, any high school in either of the original 2 groups with a 4-year graduation rate of less than 60 percent was also included. Prior to identifying specific schools, the SEA excluded from the list of potential schools those that had shown at least 50 points of growth in the Academic Performance Index (API) over the previous five years (to address the requirement that only schools showing a lack of progress over a certain number of years should be included). In addition, schools not meeting California's established minimum group size of 100 students with valid test scores for each of the three years were excluded.

California included in the pool of secondary schools from which it determines those that are the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the State, secondary schools participating under Title I, Part A of the ESEA that have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for at least two consecutive years or are in the State's lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency rates on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics combined. This was done in order to include, among its persistently lowest-achieving Tier II secondary schools, Title I secondary schools that are lower achieving than one or more Tier II schools. California is seeking to waive the definition of "persistently lowest-achieving schools" contained in section I.A.3 of the final requirements for the SIG program (74 CFR 65618 (December 10, 2009)) and incorporate that definition in identifying Tier II schools under Section I.A.1(b) of the final requirements, as amended (75 CFR 3375 (January 21, 2010)). A further description of this process and the results are provided in Enclosure 1, California's Definition of Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools.

This methodology yielded 188 persistently lowest-achieving schools. One-hundred and thirty-nine of the original 2,708 Title I schools in improvement,

corrective action, or restructuring are identified as Tier I and 49 of the original 968 secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds are identified as Tier II. These schools must choose one of the four intervention models to implement by the 2011–12 school year, unless they have already implemented one of the models within the previous two years that conforms to all the requirements of the interventions required by the SIG program, and is showing significant progress.

LEAs with schools meeting these criteria and direct-funded charter schools meeting these criteria are eligible to apply. Please see Attachment 1 for LEA Request for Application (RFA). Due to the substantial number of eligible schools resulting from this definition, California has elected not to include any other "newly eligible" schools deemed qualified for consideration in SIG Guidance from ED dated January 20, 2010, because the SEA anticipates the funds that will be available to California through the SIG award will fund only the lowest-achieving Tier I and a limited number of Tier II schools.

See Attachment 2 for the list, by LEA of each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools in California identified using the definition provided above.

California anticipates priority for funding to be focused on our list of persistently lowest-achieving schools, consistent with ED guidelines giving priority to Tier I and Tier II schools. Therefore, California will give highest priority for funding to applications from LEAs that commit to serve all of their Tier I and Tier II schools. California will not fund any Tier III schools until all LEA applications to serve Tier I or Tier II schools are funded. Given the substantial numbers of Tier I and Tier II schools on California's list of SIG-eligible schools, California does not anticipate funding any Tier III schools with the 2009–10 SIG funds.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The CDE has specified criteria that will be used to evaluate the information provided for each of the elements in LEA applications for SIG funding. The CDE has developed a rubric to provide guidance for each of these elements for use by both LEAs and reviewers in the application development and review process. California has identified eleven narrative elements to which applicant LEAs and schools must respond based on the specific application criteria established by ED. LEAs must provide their narrative response on SIG Form 3. The narrative responses will be reviewed using the SIG rubric (see Appendix B of the LEA RFA). Individual narrative elements will be scored on a scale from "0" to "2" based on rubric descriptors, and the total score on applicable narrative elements will account for 40% of the total score on the LEA application. (See page 7 for additional detail.)

In addition to the narrative response, LEAs will be required to submit a projected LEA budget (SIG Form 4a), projected school-level budget(s) (Form 4b), LEA budget narrative (SIG Form 5a), school-level budget narrative(s) (Form 5b),

assurances (SIG Forms 6 and 7), waivers requested (SIG Form 8), schools to be served chart (SIG Form 9), implementation charts detailing actions, activities to be taken, and timelines for implementation in the Tier I, II, and III schools that the LEA commits to serve (SIG Forms 10 and 11). The SIG rubric will guide reviewers in scoring the quality of the budget pages and implementation charts according to the discrete elements described therein. The rubric identifies five budget components to be scored, each at a value of five percent of the total application score, making the total value of the score on the budget pages 25 percent of the total application score. Similarly, five Implementation Chart components are identified at a value of five percent each, making the total value of the score on the Implementation Charts worth 25% of the total application score. Collaborative Signatures and Application Completeness were each assigned a value of five percent of the total application score. Collaborative Signatures will be scored by readers based on guidance in the SIG rubric, and Application Completeness will be scored by CDE staff. (See page 7 for additional detail.)

The SEA will assess each LEA's commitment to design and implement its selected intervention(s) based on the completeness and appropriateness of the LEA's Narrative Response, Implementation Charts, Budget Forms, and Collaborative Signatures. This information must indicate that the LEA has committed sufficient resources to support successful implementation as well as a comprehensive and coherent plan to fully implement all required elements of the selected interventions in order for the application to be recommended for funding. The total application score will guide the CDE staff funding recommendations to the SBE, taking into account the federal guidelines for prioritizing LEAs for funding.

The narrative elements to which each LEA must adequately respond are fully described in subsection B of the Application Requirements of the California 2009–10 SIG RFA to LEAs, and generally include:

- i. Needs Analysis including assessment instruments the LEA used, personnel involved, process for analyzing findings and selecting the intervention model, and specific findings resulting from the LEA analysis on use of California adopted standards-aligned materials and interventions, curriculum pacing/instructional time, professional development, collaboration, instructional support, use of student data, alignment of federal, state, and private resources, and effectiveness of principals, teachers, and other school staff.
- ii. Selection of Intervention Models for each Tier I and Tier II school the LEA commits to serve and the rationale for each selection. The rationale must also provide the basis for not selecting one of the other three intervention models.

iii. Demonstration of Capacity to Implement Selected Intervention Models sufficient to assure the SEA that the LEA will have adequate resources and related support for each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA's application in order to implement, fully and effectively, the required activities of the school intervention model(s) it has selected.

Note: If the LEA is not applying to serve each Tier I school, it must explain why it lacks the capacity to serve each Tier I school. If the limitation is at the LEA level then the LEA must identify the specific barriers that preclude it from serving all of its Tier I schools. If the limitation is based on conditions at a specific school or schools, then the LEA must describe those conditions.

- iv. Recruitment, Screening, and Selection of External Providers to ensure their expertise and capacity to support improvement in school and student achievement, if the LEA intends to use external entities to provide technical assistance in selecting, developing, and/or implementing one of the four intervention models. The process described must include specific selection criteria such as experience, qualifications, and record of effectiveness in providing support for school improvement.
- v. Alignment of Other Resources with the Selected Intervention Models to identify all federal, state, or private resources that are currently available to the school(s) that will be used to support implementation of the selected intervention model, including other district resources. The LEA must describe the LEA's process for ensuring that these resources will be coordinated with SIG funding to ensure maximum effectiveness in the use of all resources.
- vi. Alignment of Proposed SIG Activities with Current District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT) Process in LEAs that currently receive DAIT services to ensure that all concurrent LEA and school improvement activities are coordinated. California's DAIT process provides direct technical assistance to LEAs in corrective action to support improved LEA performance. If an LEA applying for SIG funding is currently participating in the DAIT process, the LEA must describe how it will coordinate its DAIT and SIG activities to improve the performance of its lowest-achieving schools. The description must identify the major LEA improvement actions recommended by the DAIT and describe how the LEA will align its SIG and DAIT activities.
- vii. Modification of LEA Practices or Policies to enable funded schools to implement the interventions fully and effectively. LEA practices or policies requiring modification may include, but are not limited to, collective bargaining agreements, the distribution of resources among schools, parental involvement policies and practices, school attendance areas and enrollment policies, and agreements with charter organizations. LEAs must

- identify and describe which policies and practices need to be revised, the process for revision, and a description of the proposed revision.
- viii. Sustainment of the Reforms after the Funding Period Ends to ensure continued LEA and school improvement. The LEA must provide its plan for continuing to support its SIG activities beyond the funding term, including identifying all resources that will be used to sustain the selected intervention(s) after the SIG funding period expires. The LEA must also state whether it intends to implement a waiver to extend the funding period through September 30, 2013.
- ix. Establishment of Challenging LEA Annual School Goals for Student Achievement on the state assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics that it will use to monitor the performance of each participating Tier I and Tier II school that receives SIG funds and the LEA commits to serve.
- x. Inclusion of Tier III Schools is optional. However, for LEAs that opt to serve Tier III schools, the LEA must identify and describe the services the school will receive and/or the activities the school will implement. The LEA must include any findings concerning each school's current condition and analysis of needs that informed the LEA's selection of the specific improvement activities to be implemented. The LEA must also establish challenging annual school goals for student achievement on the state's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics that it will use to monitor the performance of each participating Tier III school that receives SIG funds and the LEA commits to serve.
- xi. Consultation with Relevant Stakeholders such as students, parents, educators, and the community regarding the LEA's SIG application. The LEA must describe the specific activities it has undertaken to solicit stakeholder input on the development and implementation of the proposed school improvement activities in participating schools.

To align its SIG requirements with recently enacted state laws related to RTTT, California will require LEAs to hold at least two public meetings to consult with staff, parents, and the community regarding the LEA's SIG application and its selection of one of the four intervention models for its Tier I and II schools. The LEA must provide documentation (e.g., meeting agenda or meeting minutes) that such meetings were held, provide a summary of input obtained through these meetings, indicate which input was incorporated into the LEA's SIG application, and provide a rationale for not accepting any input that the LEA rejected.

California will evaluate the SIG applications based on the evaluation criteria described above. Qualified staff from the CDE and SBE will participate in the 2009–10 SIG RFA Readers' Conference, during which they will receive extensive

training in the requirements and purpose of SIG, will be familiarized with the SIG rubric, and will be calibrated to ensure rater reliability. Once this is accomplished, the LEA applications will be reviewed to ensure that each meets the specified criteria. Applications that adequately address all the requirements described in the application will be recommended to the SBE for funding. Applications found not to meet those requirements will not be recommended for funding. If any applicable element of the application receives a score of "0 – Inadequate", including any of the eleven Application Narrative elements, the five Implementation Chart elements, or the five Budget elements, that application will not be recommended for funding. Non-applicable elements will not be included in the scoring process. LEAs with applications not recommended for funding will be provided information regarding deficiencies in the application to assist them in preparing applications for subsequent SIG cohorts.

As noted above, in response to ED input California has developed a new scoring process that assigns specific values to each of the application components. Readers' Conference training will include specific guidance to readers concerning this scoring process. The new scoring process distributes the value of each of the elements contributing to the total application score as follows:

- Application Narrative 40 percent
 - o Each applicable narrative element is scored on a scale of "0" to "2"
 - The total narrative element score is divided by the total possible score for applicable narrative elements, and the result is converted to a score out of 40 points (e.g., 15/20 = 30 points; this application receives 30 percent out of a possible 40% for the narrative response.)
- Implementation Charts 25 percent
 - o Addresses all required activities for selected model(s) five percent
 - Services and Activities align with Needs Analysis five percent
 - Completeness and appropriateness of projected costs five percent
 - o Detail and clarity of implementation timeline five percent
 - Detail and distribution of personnel responsibilities five percent
 - on a scale of "0" to "2"; the total score for all applicable elements will be converted to the equivalent percentage out of a possible 25% for the Implementation Charts, as described under *Application Narrative* above.
- Budget Information 25 percent
 - LEA Projected Budget five percent
 - LEA Budget Narrative five percent
 - School Projected Budget five percent
 - School Budget Narrative five percent
 - o Alignment of Budgets with Implementation Plan five percent
 - Each of the Budget Information elements listed above is scored on a scale of "0" to "2"; the total score for all applicable elements will

- Collaborative Signatures 5 percent
- Application Completeness 5 percent

Assigning a specific score to each LEA application will allow for ranking all applications based on relative merit, assisting in the decision on which applications will be funded.

C. Capacity

The LEA must describe its capacity to provide adequate resources and support to implement required improvement activities for each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school that will be served (and, if applicable, an acceptable description of its lack of capacity to serve all of its Tier I schools). California's SIG RFA provides opportunities for each LEA applicant to fully describe its capacity to implement school improvement and intervention models for those schools identified as Tier I, II, and III schools. Capacity is demonstrated through a detailed description and appropriate alignment of each of the following elements:

- Needs analysis
- Process and rationale for selection of intervention model(s)
- Recruitment, screening, and selection of external providers
- Alignment with other federal, state, local, and private resources with the selected intervention model(s)
- Modification of LEA policies and practices
- Sustainment of reforms after the funding period ends
- Annual goals for student achievement
- Consultation with relevant stakeholders

An LEA that claims that it lacks sufficient capacity to serve each of its Tier I schools will be required to provide a rationale supporting that claim. The CDE will review the description of the limitation and any supporting evidence provided by the LEA to determine whether the rationale provided supports the LEA's claim. In cases in which the LEA's description of its lack of capacity is deemed insufficient to justify not serving all of its Tier I schools, the state will require additional programmatic information and may consider an alternate level of funding.

D. Descriptive Information

(1) Process and timeline for approving LEA applications.

A number of important dates are identified below for LEAs or chartering authorities intending to apply for SIG funds.

Important Events	Dates	
Early notification of the RFA and the list of persistently lowest-achieving schools sent to each LEA that has Tier I and/or Tier II schools	Week of March 1, 2010	
RFA posted on the CDE Web site	June 23, 2010	
LEA seeks public input and approval on its application by its local governing board	Prior to July 2, 2010	
LEA SIG application due to the CDE	July 2, 2010	
The CDE conducts a SIG RFA readers' conference where readers evaluate and score applications	To Be Determined	
SBE takes action on LEA applications. The CDE will immediately notify LEAs of approval status. LEAs receiving a FY 2009 SIG sub-grant must begin full implementation of the intervention model(s) they select for their funded schools at the beginning of the 2010–11 school year.	To Be Determined	
Sub-grant award notification letters sent to LEAs	August 2010	
Signed sub-grant award notification returned to the CDE	Within 10 days of receipt by the LEA	
LEAs with applications approved at the July SBE meeting will submit (for SBE information and progress update only) their revised LEA Plan amendment to the CDE. *	October 1, 2010	

^{*} While completion of the LEA Plan addendum can be completed concurrent with initial implementation of the intervention(s), the models must be implemented within the required timelines described in the LEA Request for Applications.

(2) Reviewing LEAs' Annual Improvement Goals for Tier I and Tier II Schools

Each participating LEA must establish clear and measurable goals for student achievement on the state's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics, using Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program data, AYP, and API. The CDE will use annual results from these assessment

and accountability systems to determine progress made and compare them with LEA applicant goals in reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and subgroup categories to determine whether the funded LEA Tier I and Tier II schools have met their goals. In cases in which one or more of the schools served in an LEA are not meeting their improvement goals, the LEA's sub-grant will be considered for a reduction equivalent to the annual award for the non-achieving school(s) with the intent that the school(s) no longer receive(s) funding.

(3) Reviewing LEAs' Annual Improvement Goals for Tier III Schools

As is required for Tier I and Tier II schools, each participating LEA must establish clear and measurable goals for student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics for Tier III schools based on STAR Program data, AYP, and API. The CDE will use annual results from these assessment and accountability systems to determine progress made in Tier III schools and compare them with LEA student achievement goals in reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and subgroup categories to determine whether the funded LEAs have met their goals. In cases in which one or more of the schools served in an LEA are not meeting their improvement goals, the LEA's sub-grant will be considered for a reduction equivalent to the annual award for the non-performing school(s) with the intent that the school(s) no longer receive(s) funding.

(4) Monitoring LEAs That Receive a School Improvement Sub-grant

To fulfill its monitoring responsibilities, the CDE will require participating LEAs to submit appropriate fiscal and program information annually (see below). The CDE will review the reported information in addition to annual LEA and school academic performance data to determine whether schools are making appropriate progress in the implementation of the identified school intervention model(s) and in meeting student achievement goals. The SBE will consider a school's progress and performance on these measures when determining whether to make a reduction equivalent to the annual award for the non-performing school(s) with the intent that the school(s) no longer receive(s) funding.

In addition, representatives of the state and/or the regional consortia may conduct site visits to a selected representative sample of participating LEAs and their participant schools. The purpose of these visits would be to validate information submitted by LEAs and gather additional information from interviews and observations for technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation purposes.

Annual Reports

The CDE will annually review the following information that is to be submitted by each SIG sub-grantee:

- i. Report annual accountability data to the CDE including, but not limited to:
 - Fiscal information on the use of sub-grant funds provided under ESEA Section 1003 (a) and (g) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act. All audits of financial statements must and will be conducted in accordance with Government Auditing Standards (GAS) and with policies, procedures, and guidelines established by the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), Single Audit Act Amendments, and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133.
 - Measures to demonstrate implementation of the research and evidence-based strategies identified in the sub-grant application.
 - The number and percentage of students who score proficient and above in reading/language arts and mathematics, as measured by the state's annual assessments, both overall in the LEA and for each school receiving funds through this application.
 - Whether the LEA has made AYP and exited out of Program Improvement (PI) status, and whether any of the schools receiving funds through this application have made AYP and exited from PI status.
- ii. Respond to any specific data requests from ED.
- iii. Utilize actions and activities identified in the LEA's implementation chart for each school and their respective implementation timelines to determine implementation progress. Also, review student achievement data and performance benchmarks to evaluate the effectiveness of improvement strategies identified in the SIG sub-grant application for purposes of local monitoring and continuous improvement efforts.

The CDE will review each LEA's progress in meeting its established improvement goals and make a recommendation to the SBE on whether to renew an LEA's SIG when one or more schools are not meeting their goals. When it has been determined that an LEA has not made sufficient progress toward reaching its goals, the sub-grant will be considered for a reduction equivalent to the annual award for the non-performing school(s) with the intent that the school(s) no longer receive funding.

Leading Indicators

The SEA will also review the performance of participating schools on the nine leading indicators identified by ED in its January 20, 2010, SIG Guidance, and will consider progress on these indicators when determining whether to adjust an LEA's sub-grant. For those indicators for which the CDE does not currently collect data, the CDE will require that funded LEAs include this information in their annual reports for this program.

Site Visits

When selected as part of a site visit sample, LEAs and their participating schools will be visited by representatives of the regional consortia and/or state staff, which will validate information provided in expenditure and program evaluation reports and gather more detailed information on implementation efforts and challenges.

(5) SIG funding priority to LEAs

The CDE will allocate SIG funds to LEAs in accordance with the following priorities:

- i. LEAs that commit to serve all of their Tier I and Tier II schools.
- ii. LEAs that commit to serve some, but not all, of their Tier I and Tier II schools.
- iii. LEAs that commit to serve Tier III schools.

California anticipates that SIG funding will not be sufficient to fund all eligible Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools. LEA applications to serve Tier I and Tier II schools will have highest priority for funding. If sufficient SIG funds are not available to allow each LEA to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention model(s) at all of their Tier I and Tier II schools, the CDE may take into account the distribution of Tier I and Tier II schools among such LEAs in the State to ensure that Tier I schools throughout the State can be served. In making award determinations, the SEA will consider an LEA's capacity to implement the selected school interventions, and other factors, such as the number of schools served in each tier, the selected intervention model, school enrollment, and the overall quality of LEA applications.

Persistently lowest-achieving charter schools that do not select the School Closure intervention model must clarify how the intervention selected will create a significantly different instructional model and school culture.

(6) Criteria to Prioritize Among Tier III Schools

Criteria to prioritize applications of Tier III schools may be based on the year in PI, length of time in PI beyond year 5 PI status, year of LEA PI status, decile rank on California's API accountability system, and actual API performance in recent years.

(7) CDE Takeover of Schools

The CDE does not intend to take over a SIG applicant school.

(8) SEA direct services to any participating school in Tier I or II

The CDE does not intend to provide direct services to any schools in Tier I or Tier II.

E. Assurances

The CDE assures it will comply with the following:

- Comply with the final requirements and ensure that each LEA carries out its responsibilities.
- Award each approved LEA a SIG award in an amount that is of sufficient size and scope to implement the selected intervention for each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA's application that the SEA has determined the LEA has the capacity to serve.
- Apportion its school improvement funds in order to make sub-grants to LEAs, as applicable, that are renewable for the length of the period of availability, taking into account any waivers that may have been requested and received by the CDE or an individual LEA to extend the period of availability.
- Carry over 25 percent of its fiscal year (FY) 2009 SIG funds, combine those funds with FY 2010 SIG funds (depending on the availability of appropriations), and award those funds to eligible LEAs consistent with the final requirements if not every Tier I school in the State receives FY 2009 school improvement funds to implement a school improvement model in the 2010–11 school year (unless the CDE does not have sufficient school improvement funds to serve every Tier I school in the State).
- Monitor each LEA's implementation of the interventions supported with SIG funds.
- To the extent a Tier I or Tier II school implementing the restart model becomes a charter school LEA, hold the charter school operator or charter management organization accountable, or ensure that the charter school authorizer holds the respective entity accountable, for meeting the final requirements.

- Post on its Web site, within 30 days of awarding School Improvement Subgrants, all final LEA applications and a summary of the sub-grants that includes the following information: name and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) district identification number of each LEA awarded a subgrant; amount of the sub-grant; name and NCES school identification number of each school to be served; and, type of intervention to be implemented in each Tier I and Tier II school.
- Report the specific school-level data required in section III of the final notice.

F. CDE Reservation

The CDE will reserve no more than five percent for its administration, evaluation, and technical assistance expenses.

The CDE will use these funds to conduct annual data collection and analysis activities, provide general technical assistance activities related to application submission and acceptable uses of funds, and coordinate direct technical assistance to schools to be provided by the Statewide System of Support. In addition, a small portion of the state reservation will be used to facilitate the random site visits to funded schools as part of California's plan for SIG program monitoring and technical assistance. The SEA will conduct a series of webinars and conference calls relating to the SIG LEA RFA application process, expanded Statewide System of School Support meetings to inform regional directors on the application and implementation processes, ongoing one-on-one technical assistance from CDE staff to eligible applicants, and CDE web page postings of frequently asked questions and answers and other pertinent information concerning SIG implementation.

LEAs receiving SIG grant awards must participate in a statewide evaluation process and provide all required information on a timely basis. In addition, LEAs must respond to any additional surveys or other methods of data collection that may be required by the CDE or ED throughout the life of the sub-grant.

G. Consultation with Stakeholders

On December 22, 2009, the CDE consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its application. Please see the Enclosure 2.

In addition, in developing this application and ensuring its alignment with the state's plans regarding the RTTT and SFSF, the CDE consulted with the California Secretary of Education, SBE, Department of Finance, and the California Comprehensive Assistance Center.

H. Waivers

The CDE has requested waivers of requirements as listed below and intends to fully comply with all stated assurances: (Please see Enclosure 3)

- 1) Waive Section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. § 1225(b)) to extend the period of availability of school improvement funds for the SEA and all of its LEAs to September 30, 2013.
- 2) Waive Section 1116(b)(12) of the ESEA to permit LEAs to allow their Tier I schools that will implement a turnaround or restart model to "start over" in the school improvement timeline.
- 3) Waive the 40 percent poverty eligibility threshold in Section 1114(a)(1) of the ESEA to permit LEAs to implement a schoolwide program in a Tier I school that does not meet the poverty threshold.
- 4) Waive Section I.A.3 of the final requirements to permit the inclusion of a "minimum n" in the identification criteria for persistently lowest-achieving schools. The "minimum n" requested is 100 and is no greater than the "minimum n" approved in California's Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook. The "minimum n" is determined by the number of valid tests scores included in the AYP determinations and consists of students that are enrolled in the school for a full academic year as defined in California's approved Accountability Workbook. The "minimum n" will be applied in each of the last three years to ensure that schools with unreliable data, due to small numbers of students, are not identified thereby increasing the likelihood that identified schools are in a good position to successfully implement the School Improvement Grant turnaround models.
- 5) Waive the definition of "persistently lowest-achieving schools" in Tier II contained in Section I.A.3 of the final requirements for the SIG program (74 *C.F.R.* 65618 (December 10, 2009)) and incorporate an alternate definition in identifying Tier II schools under section I.A.1(b) of the final requirements, as amended (75 *C.F.R.* 3375 (January 21, 2010)). This waiver will allow California to capture, among its 5 percent persistently lowest-achieving Tier II secondary schools, Title I secondary schools that are lower achieving than one or more Tier II schools but do not qualify as Tier II schools because they are receiving Title I, Part A funds and do not qualify as Tier I schools because they are not among the lowest-achieving 5 percent of such schools in the State. Any Title I secondary school that is identified through this waiver as being among the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the State would be identified by California as one of the State's Tier II schools.

Waiver Assurances

- The State assures that it will ensure that any LEA that chooses to implement one or more of these waivers will comply with Section I.A.7 of the final requirements.
- The State assures that it will permit an LEA to implement the waiver(s) only if the LEA receives a SIG and requests to implement the waiver(s) in its application. As such, the LEA may only implement the waivers(s) in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools, as applicable, included in its application.
- The State assures that it will ensure that any LEA implementing the waiver of sections 1003(g)(1) and (7) and will provide each Tier II school served through the waiver all of the State and local funds it would have received in the absence of being served with school improvement funds through the waiver.
- The State assures that, prior to submitting this request in its SIG application, the State provided all LEAs in the State that are eligible to receive a SIG with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on this request and has attached a copy of that notice as well as copies of any comments it had received from LEAs. The State also assures that it provided notice and information regarding this waiver request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice.
- The State assures that, if it is granted one or more of the waivers requested above, it will submit to ED a report that sets forth the name and NCES District Identification Number for each LEA implementing a waiver, including which specific waivers each LEA is implementing.

California's Definition of Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools

The identification of persistently lowest-achieving schools in California is a multi-step process that is informed by both federal and state law. More information can be found on the California Department of Education (CDE) on the Identification Criteria—

Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools Web page. The steps in identifying schools as persistently lowest-achieving are summarized below.

Step 1: Identifying the Pool of Schools

Per the <u>School Improvement Grant (SIG) guidance</u> (Outside Source) developed by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring must be identified for the pool and be classified as Tier I schools. In California, these are Title I schools that were identified for Program Improvement (PI) during the 2009-10 school year. Per the Federal guidance, these schools must be part of a local educational agency (LEA) which receives Title I funds.

Also required to be part of the pool are secondary schools that are eligible for federal Title I funds, but do not receive those funds. Per the Federal guidance, these secondary schools must be part of a LEA which receives Title I funds. These schools are classified as Tier II schools per the SIG program.

More information on the definition of the Tiers may be found on the California Department of Education (CDE) Definition of Tiers I, II, and III Web page.

Step 2: Identifying Five Percent of the Pool

To ensure that no one type of school is over-represented in the final list of schools eligible for the School Improvement Grant and to facilitate systemic reform across the K-12 segment, the pool of schools is divided into five separate groups. The table below shows the groupings. Five percent of each group is identified.

Tier I Pool

Elementary schools in PI Middle schools in PI High schools in PI

Tier II Pool

Middle schools, eligible but not receiving Title I funds
High schools, eligible but not receiving Title I funds
Middle and high schools identified in the Tier I Pool but not identified as part of
the lowest five percent (California has applied for a waiver to change the Tier II
definition as part of the criteria for identifying schools.)

Group		Five Percent
Elementary schools in PI (Tier I)	1,677	84
Middle schools in PI (Tier I)	601	30
High schools in PI (Tier I)	430	21
Sub-total selected from Tier I		135
Middle schools, eligible but not receiving Title I funds (Tier II)		15
High schools, eligible but not receiving Title I funds (Tier II)	674	33
Sub-total selected from Tier II		48
Total	3,676	183

Step 3: Evaluating Academic Performance and Progress

To identify which schools are the lowest achieving in each of the five groups, a threeyear average proficiency rate for English-language arts (ELA) and mathematics is computed for all schools.

The number of students who scored proficient in ELA and mathematics as shown on the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports in the "All Students" group is summed across 2007, 2008, and 2009. That number is then divided by the number of valid scores from the AYP reports in the "All Students" group over the same time period to produce a three-year average proficiency rate. All schools are then sorted on the three-year average proficiency rate from high to low.

Schools are also evaluated on their academic progress on the state's Academic Performance Index or API. Schools that gain a net of 50 points or more on the API growth score over the last five years or meet the statewide goal of 800 during the 2009-10 school year are deemed to have shown significant academic progress and do not continue in the analysis.

Step 4: Applying Exclusions

Before selecting the five percent of schools in each of the five groups as specified in Step 2 above, school size is evaluated. Consistent with the number (n) size rules for the state's API system and for AYP determinations, schools with fewer than 100 valid test scores in any of the three years evaluated (2007, 2008, and 2009) are excluded. Valid scores refer to the number of students continuously enrolled for a full academic year as defined in California's Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook. (Note: California has applied for a waiver to include a "minimum n" as part of the criteria for identifying schools.)

No other exclusions are made.

Step 5: Identifying Schools Based on Academic Performance

Using the five groups of schools identified in Step 2, individual schools are identified based on their three-year proficiency rate until the five percent figure is reached. For example, within the "Elementary Schools in PI" group, the school with the lowest three-year average proficiency rate is identified first, followed by the school with the second lowest three-year average proficiency rate and so on until the figure representing five percent is reached.

Step 6: Identifying Schools Based on Graduation Rates

Federal guidance requires that in addition to the five percent of schools identified because of academic performance, schools in Tiers I and II be identified if the school's graduation rate is below 60 percent over a number of years.

For this identification process, California employed the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) four-year completer rate for which we are approved to use until four years of longitudinal data are available through the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). More information about the NCES four-year completer rate can be found in the 2009 Adequate Yearly Progress Information Guide located on the CDE's AYP Web page.

The NCES four-year completer rate was evaluated for schools in Tier I and Tier II. Any school with a high school graduation rate below 60 percent in each of the last four years was included in the list. (Note: To be consistent with the n-size approved in California's Accountability Workbook, only schools with 100 or more valid scores in each of the last four years were included in the analysis.)

Step 7: Completing the List of Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools

The final step in the process is to add Tier I schools identified in Step 6 to the Tier I schools identified by academic performance, and then add Tier II schools identified in Step 6 to Tier II schools identified by academic performance. Finally, Tier III schools (all other schools included in the Tier I pool but not identified as part of the lowest five percent are identified).

Lists of schools will be posted on the CDE Web page separately by Tier. An additional list indicating which schools were identified because of their high school graduation rate is also posted.

State of California

CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

1430 N Street, Suite 5111 Sacramento, CA 95814 Phone: 916-319-0827 Fax: 916-319-0175



Meeting Notice: Title I Committee of Practitioners (COP)

Meeting will be held at

California Department of Education 1430 "N" Street, Room 6303 Sacramento, California 916-319-0833

and

available via Conference Call

DATE: Tuesday, December 22, 2009

TIME: 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Call-In #: (641) 715-3625

Passcode: 251211#

- 1. CALL TO ORDER: Karen Ryback, Chair 9:00 a.m.
 - 1.1 Roll Call
 - 1.2 Approve Minutes from July 30, 2009 Meeting
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENT: 9:15 a.m.

This agenda item is included to allow members of the public opportunity to ask questions or discuss non-agenda items with the Committee. There will be a three-minute time limit per person.

3. ACTION ITEMS - REGULAR AGENDA: 9:30 a.m.

Protocol for action items includes a staff presentation, questions from the Committee, public input, closing of public input, deliberation by the Committee, and voting by the Committee. The Committee may take action as deemed necessary and appropriate. During public input there will be a three-minute time limit per person.

- 3.1 Review of the federal guidance on the School Improvement Grant (SIG) application for input on the State Educational Agency's application. Presented by Julie Baltazar, Administrator, Regional Coordination and Support Office
 - http://www.ed.gov/programs/sif/applicant.html SIG Application
 - http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/programs.html SIG Final Requirements

4. ADJOURNMENT